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Richard Rogers Bowker

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FOR A SINGLE LIFE TO SPAN THE TIME BETWEEN the discovery of gold in California and the NRA effort at economic recovery is in itself worthy of note. Richard Rogers Bowker, however, comes to our mind because of lasting achievement in an amazingly varied field of activities rather than because he stretched the traditional *three score and ten to four score and five*. His eyes opened on the ocean front of eastern Massachusetts. They closed amidst his beloved *Berkshires* in the west. Most of his life was spent in New York City, but despite handicaps of eyesight that would have frightened less fearless souls he travelled widely in many parts of the world.

Author and friend of authors, publisher and friend of publishers, a *business man and industrialist*, an economist and a pioneer in political education though never an office holder himself, one of the staunchest fighters for international copyright this country ever saw, he was always a man to whose whole being the printed book was vital. This is not the place to speak in detail of those varied activities, but it is not improper to call attention to them as indicative of the catholic interests of the man and of the kindly instincts he showed to all so fortunate as to come in contact with him.

He played many parts while on the stage, and through them all runs the message of the book. He was scarcely out of college when he became literary editor of the *New York Mail*, following that with similar service on the *Herald*, and that with two years in London as British representative of the house of Harper & Brothers. That was a London of Froude and Freeman, Spencer and Tyndall and Huxley, Trollope and Hardy and Black, Besant and Rice, Tennyson and Swinburne, Browning and Morris, with many of whom he came into close contact.

Given such associations it is but natural to find him at the Philadelphia gathering in 1876 when the *American Library Association* was formed, and to see him a constant attendant at following meetings. He is credited by Mrs. Carr with attendance at 34 meetings up to 1929.

He bore an active part in the founding of *THE LIBRARY JOURNAL*, and served as its editor from the beginning until his death. His hand was on the helm, his guidance trimmed the sails, his experience plotted the course, welcoming the advice and help of others but calmly expecting and accepting the master's responsibility for the outcome of the voyage.

When the first library club in this country was organized in New York City in 1885 he was chosen its first president. He was a member of the Brooklyn Library since 1888, and when it joined forces with the Brooklyn Public Library in 1903 he became a director of the latter, a trust he held until his death. From 1904 until 1928 he was president of the Stockbridge Library Association.

Few in the library world had wider acquaintance, few had more lasting friendships, few were more generous in recognition of new talent, few more cherishing of old memories.

He spanned the time between our own days and those of Winsor and Poole and Cutter, something given to none of the rest of us. Like Billings who ranked high as statistician and engineer and surgeon as well as librarian, Bowker held his own in fields quite as varied and was also constant in his interest in every phase of library work. His memory will long inspire librarians, his achievements arouse their envy and admiration.

—HARRY MILLER LYDENBERG.

Richard Rogers Bowker

Friend with Life

"What through the years . . . a man has become, what he is in himself, what he is to his fellow men, this is the test of life."

—*The Arts of Life.*

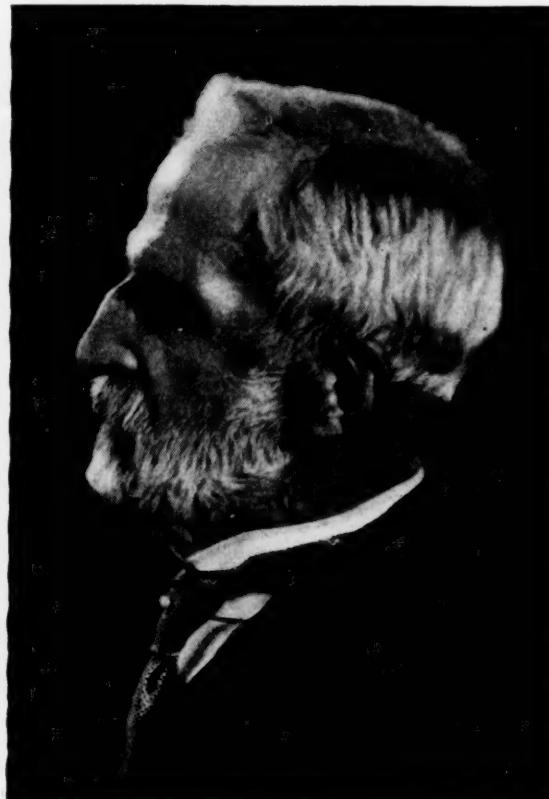
RICHARD ROGERS BOWKER has, as he said of others, "gone over the far horizon." It is with the hope that this sketch and these memorials will not only form a tribute to a great man from those who knew and loved him, but prove an introduction to those who may not have had the privilege of close personal acquaintance. Perhaps it is intended even more for the latter group. Those who, through years — no matter how many or how few — have known R. R. Bowker will find no memorial that can take the place of charming memories, — as many as there were meetings.

"It has been suggested," he commences, with characteristic thoughtfulness, a manuscript memoir, "that I should make a record of the activities of a varied and busy life and perhaps save trouble to my associates when I shall have gone over to the majority." Deepest appreciation must be expressed for this document as well as humble astonishment over the tremendous variety of activities, each of which made the world a better place to live in. Facts and phrases have been freely borrowed from these recollections

which had yet passed little beyond the memorandum stage. Quotations, unless otherwise ascribed, are taken from it.

Of childhood, there is this refreshing note:

"I was Salem born, September 4, 1848, of English stock, with a dash of Huguenot blood through my mother, and was the only son of Daniel Rogers and Theresa Maria (Savory) Bowker, whose other child was a younger sister, Carolyn Theresa, still close to me. My father as a young man was of exceptional vigor and enterprise as a merchant, first in relation with his father, Joel Bowker, dealing at wholesale in coal and salt and like commodities in the brick warehouse at Bowker's Wharf, and later as junior



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partner in Phillips, Goodhue and Bowker at Phillips Wharf. . . . The death of the senior partner at the time of the panic of 1857 wrecked the firm, and my father came to New York, where he interested himself in barrel machinery, having a factory in the old brick building . . . which was fully insured against fire but was blown down by storm. . . . My mother was of fine character, strong will and delightful man-

ner, and was determined that her children should be well educated."

When one reads in a formal essay on the subject¹ that the "first of the arts of life is education, the leading forth of the human faculties in the child, the youth, the man, as Nature makes them ready," one feels that he must have evolved the precept from his own experience. Schooling which commenced at Marm Percy's, in Salem, continued at another Dame School, Miss Day's in New York. The chosen college was Harvard, where a forebear had been president, but circumstances prevented, and a compromise was reached in his having a year in public school, a prerequisite, and entering the Free Academy in 1863 as a member of the Introductory Class. During his college years, the Academy was transformed, and he graduated five years later, 1868, from the College of the City of New York.

It is mere conjecture to try to fancy what direction the young man's life would have taken, had he matriculated at Harvard. It would, of course, have been purely a variation of externals, for the same thoughtful mind would have written of the scholar:

A lighthous'd rock, steadfast he stand and straight,
Hold fast the faith, make manifest the light.
For this is he, who, strong in wisdom's might,
Is Teacher, Prophet, Leader consecrate.

— "The Scholar," in *From the Pen of R.R.B.*

The 1862-1868 period at Harvard was comparatively uninteresting. There had been steady growth and reform under President Thomas Hill, but the fortunes of the institution awaited the following year, 1869, and Charles W. Eliot, for the revolutionary changes during what S. E. Morison has characterized as an "era fertile in great scholars and inspiring teachers."

At any rate, he could say, many years later, "I was not sorry that I did not go to Harvard, for the democratic nature of the City College was vitally useful in shaping its students, and the college course was remarkable for its scope and teaching staff." Details of this democratic nature he gives in his "The Early Faculty" and "Student Activities in the '60's."²

Scholarship meant much, but if his life may be used as an example, the best college training which is to give the student "those opportunities for which he cannot pay except in promise of future service," must include not only books but the broadening social activities as well. The following episodes illustrate the point. He initiated the first endeavor at student self-government in American colleges which was "summarily repressed by our West Point President," and further resulted in reducing him from the running for

first honor of his class, with a credit of 99.3 per cent to fourth honor. Also, he obtained for the college the Gamma Chapter of New York of Phi Beta Kappa, but "as the faculty had first to be initiated, and President Webster had become my stout enemy because of these rebellious activities, he insisted that he should blackball me, so that I did not come into Phi Beta Kappa until later years."

These incidents likewise illustrate two characteristics which functioned actively through life—fearlessness when in the right and a sense of group betterment. But young Bowker was also occupied with other activities and affiliations which were to constitute his life. It proved the beginning of his journalistic and publishing career, and it commenced the period of lasting friendships.

Despite any "stout enemies," he could say, "My most vital relationships throughout life, outside family ties, have come from my early college associations, partly with men of my own college as such, and scarcely less with those of other colleges with whom my college fraternity brought me into close intimacy. It was in my Freshman year that I was initiated into Manhattan Chapter of Alpha Delta Phi."³ Wherever Mr. Bowker mentions the matter, this vitality is apparent. In 1869, five of the young men started the historic Camp Manhattan at Lake George which existed without break for fifty years. "In this camp, whose first years I describe in *Scribner's Monthly* for March, 1879, and with its men, I have had the most vital intimacies, and through the relationship of Everett P. Wheeler, Edward M. Shepard and others of our Chapter, and with George William Curtis, Edward Everett Hale, James Russel Lowell and others to whom the fraternity was my introduction, I have come into large part of such public service as I have been able as a private citizen to do."

In fact, if there is any one characteristic which describes R. R. Bowker's life, it would be the exercise of what some one has called the "infinite capacity of making friends"; all social and business activities were built upon the solid foundation of personal friendship. During his journalistic career, C. H. Sweetser and many others played important parts. With Frederick Leyboldt and others in his early connections of publishing in his own interest, it is plainly traceable. It flowered in a manner during his residence of 1880-1882 in England, as representative of Harper, in his official and social relationships with William Black, Anne Thackeray Ritchie, George Du Maurier, Browning, Swinburne, Hardy, Reade, and the other important literary

¹ Bowker, R. R. *Of Education*. 1903.

² *City College Alumnus*. March and September, 1926.

³ In 1911, the charter was withdrawn, and the Manhattan Chapter, which was continued as a new fraternity of Delta Alpha "has maintained the high ethical, intellectual and social standards" of the earlier group.

figures of the eighties. It colored his successful activities in business. It placed him in line in his friendly shoulder-to-shoulder fights with similarly high-minded men for free trade, postal and civil service reform, and codification of the copyright. It motivated the great contributions which he made to the library field.

Young Bowker's career was planned for journalism, law or business. Since the first offered an immediate, practical way of helping the family, he chose it,—though he eventually achieved his ambition in being employed in all three. Interest in and aptitude for writing came naturally. During college days, he was editor, publisher and proprietor of the fourth college journal in the country, the *Collegian*, and he edited the College Song Book and participated in a collection of college songs and music edited by Henry R. Waite.

It seems natural, therefore, that he should contribute the account of his college commencement to the *New York Evening Mail*, "then in its first year, whose editor, Charles H. Sweetser, an Amherst graduate, was a brilliant journalist but a sad financier." And it is not to be wondered at that Sweetser offered this youth of twenty the post of city editor, and that, within the year, of literary editor. Bowker followed the devious paths of journalism until he left the *Mail* in 1875, but formed an outside connection with the *New York Tribune*, under Dr. Ripley.

Whatever the permanent contribution this purely journalistic activity may have made—and no experience was ever without a mutual benefit—it was the gateway through which he stepped into one of his mature interest and permanent work. "Meantime, during my connection with the *Mail*, my relations with publishers and authors had brought me into touch with Frederick

Leypoldt, who had retired from Leypoldt and Holt to develop his *Weekly Trade Circular* and other bibliographical enterprises. He asked me to contribute to his publications, and this led to the association with the *Publishers' Weekly*, which I have since always maintained, except during my years abroad, even alongside my engrossing Edison relations. . . . I have given a historical sketch, 'Publishers' Weekly Through 50 Years,' in the issues of January 1, 8, and 15, 1921." This interesting story cannot be repeated here.

Mr. Bowker had the gifted executive faculty of making the subject in hand or the interest of the associate so completely predominant that, unless one happened to know that there were many, many other activities and interests, one might feel that this was his major interest. Such was not the case; the book industry, bibliography, libraries were but a part of manifold activity and interest.



1868

Notes on business activities alone suggest chapters for a biography or for a history of the men and companies with which he was associated. "I had won some repute," he says, "as an organizer and executive in the political field, and in 1890, I said to friends that I should be glad to be tried out as an executive of a corporation. Within the same week, I was offered the secretaryship of the Northern Pacific Railroad and . . . the post of first Vice-President of the Edison Company of Brooklyn. . . . Mr. Villard, himself an Edison director, advised me to accept the latter post, which I did. This brought me into most interesting relations in new lines, in the financial world with the Morgan partners, F. S. Smithers, Boisevaine of Amsterdam, D. O. Mills, R. Fulton Cutting, and such men, and on the industrial and scientific lines with Edison himself, Ferranti, and others. . . ." In 1896, he was offered the ex-

cutive responsibility of the *New York Times*; but, "I did not then feel that I had the Edison organization sufficiently completed to run two such important enterprises in team and therefore declined the offer. . . ." In 1896, also, he was offered the presidency of the Third Avenue Railroad, in New York, "but also declined this offer, which involved such strenuous application to business difficulties and details as might result in breaking down my health while filling my purse." In 1895, as an officer of the Edison Company, he went to Paris to see the De Laval turbines in operation, and on to Sweden to see the head of the De Laval Company. He bought turbines of this type for the Edison Company. He remained with the Edison Company until 1899, and in 1901, he became Vice-President of the newly organized De Laval Steam Turbine Company, here. Later, he was for some years Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors. Meantime, in 1902, he became Vice-President of the De Laval Separator Company, an active interest which he continued to hold.

In paying passing compliment to Melvil Dewey and the D.C., at the A.L.A. anniversary conference, at Atlantic City, in October, 1926, Mr. Bowker brings out a characteristic phrase in mentioning the "eternal battle between standardization and progress which can never be altogether solved." It gives play to a wide range of ideas in the varied activities of this remarkable man, from simple organization on the one hand to outright reform on the other. Closely related with his publishing and booktrade interests were his efforts to organize the booktrade organizations which led to fruition in 1901, when "the American Booksellers' Association was organized, largely through the efforts of Adolph Growoll, then managing editor of the *Publishers' Weekly*, and Charles Butler, of Brentano's, in which I had only an indirect part." Then, there was the great copyright struggle. He amusingly describes in his conference retrospect, "the copyright offices as a drawer in his (Ainsworth R. Spofford's) desk into which were thrust records and remittances alike." And while this note has little to do with the immediate problem, it shows what the general attitude was at that time. His articles and two of his best books reflect the story of that struggle, in cooperation with such men as Thorvald Solberg and others.

There were also less specialized fields. "The first important legislation in which I had a hand was the preparation of the postal code of 1879," in which he was the youngest member of the working committee. And, "In 1883, I became an early and active member of the Civil Service Reform Association . . . and in that year (1880) after the civil service reform bill for New York State had been defeated at Albany and the . . .

Association had abandoned hope, I planned a coup of political strategy which Edward M. Shepard and I worked out through our respective friends in two political parties—Speaker Chapin on the Democratic side and Theodore Roosevelt and Walter Howe on the Republican side—which promptly sent the bill to Governor Cleveland for his ready approval." Free trade, likewise, creates a chapter of interest in his life; the story commences about the time of his college graduation and continues as a formal account through 1922, when he "prepared personally several bulletins in opposition to the Fordney-McCumber tariff of 1922 which I christened the 'mad tariff.' . . ." In 1930 he and Norman H. Davis initiated the Council for Tariff Reduction, the successor to the Free Trade League of which Mr. Bowker was president after Major Putnam's passing.

It would be but natural to find also an intense interest in politics. The maiden speech was made at Hackensack, N. J., in 1868, and in a fight against the party by machine methods, though a thorough Republican, young Bowker, with George Haven Putnam, and Frederick W. Whiting planned and developed the Independent Republican Committee of the "mugwump" movement. Throughout the years, he has taken his part in what he happily calls "political progress," but always as a private citizen. "In the early days of the 'mugwump' movement," he says, "when we were opposing the professional office seekers who made their living from politics, we had a general understanding, though never a compact, that we would refrain from seeking or accepting office." He was offered various posts, "but it seemed to me best that some of us should make proof that we were not in 'politics' for what it might bring us but rather to follow such fine examples of public service in private life as have been offered New York by R. Fulton Cutting and Robert W. De Forest."

R. R. Bowker's approach to libraries was in two ways—through bibliography and through organization. The importance of one over the other can be only a matter of opinion, though perhaps the most vital was the bibliographical activity. In time, the library world would have organized. The particular value which librarians will, as a whole, feel will probably be his benignant guidance through all the years through the medium of *THE LIBRARY JOURNAL*.

There is no indication that he indulged in such activities during his college days as did Melvil Dewey who, he reports, thought out the D.C. during morning chapel during a particularly dull sermon by the president at Amherst, or of Dr. Poole who commenced his *Index* during his college days. While he had an interest in anything creative, it was not until he stepped through the

door of journalism into his relationship with Frederick Leypoldt that he began this activity. The story of his aid to Mr. Leypoldt, whom he characterizes as "a great bibliographer, enthusiastic in his devotion, who founded many other enterprises, but who too often sent his literary ships to sea without commercial ballast," and the *American Catalogue* is too well known to need detailed repeating here. To aid in the great enterprise of the *American Catalogue*, which had swamped Leypoldt financially, he borrowed money from friends to purchase the *Publishers' Weekly*, and from that time on, the two-fold interest of the book industry and libraries was his own. Concerning libraries, there can be no better way of retelling a well-known story than in giving it in Mr. Bowker's last version.

"The *Publishers' Weekly* had started a column of library notes, and we discussed in 1875 plans

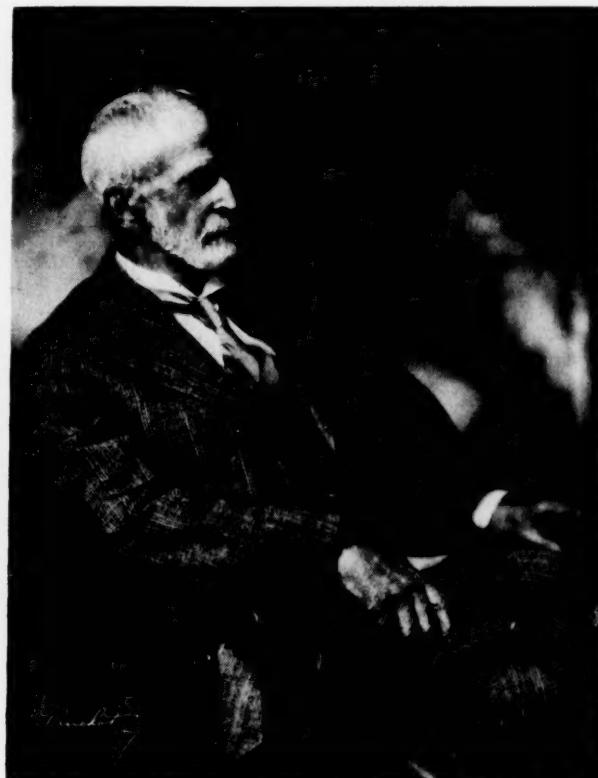
for a library periodical. Melvil Dewey, beginning at Amherst his library career, had a like thought, and our announcement brought him to New York for consultation, in the course of which it was suggested that there should be an association of librarians, which had failed to realize from the conference of 1853. Accordingly, I drafted a telegram which Mr. Leypoldt, Mr. Dewey, and myself sent to prominent librarians throughout the country and which started the movement resulting in the American Library Association.

"THE LIBRARY JOURNAL was published in September, 1876, with Dewey and myself as

managing editor and general editor, rôles of undetermined ranking relation, and Charles A. Cutter as bibliographical editor. The arrangements with Mr. Dewey came to an end for business reasons, and on my resumption of office relations after my return from abroad, I took the editorial responsibility which I have held ever since,⁴ though THE LIBRARY JOURNAL

remained the property of Mr. Leypoldt's estate until the amalgamation of the several periodicals under the R. R. Bowker Company in 1911.

"The American Library Association held its organizing meeting in Philadelphia in October, 1876, with Justin Winsor as first president. Although it maintained permanent office quarters in one place, at first Boston, and later Chicago, it adopted the happy custom of peripatetic annual conferences, so that the members of the profession, receiving and making visits, became the



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more thoroughly nationalized and known to each other. A list of those which I personally attended suggests the wide range of these meetings, including the early conferences at Philadelphia, 1876; New York, 1877; Boston, 1879; and—after my return from London—Buffalo, 1883; Lake George, 1885; Thousand Islands, 1887; Catskill Mountains, 1888; and St. Louis, 1889, not to speak of those of later years. Since the organization of the Council of the A.L.A., I have been for most years a member as well as a Fellow of the American Library Institute, plan-

⁴ Mr. Bowker was not actively engaged as editor for the years 1880-1886.

ned in 1905 and formally organized at a Lake Placid Council meeting in 1906.

"The New York Library Club was organized by Mr. Dewey in 1885, and I became first president, presiding also at the anniversary dinner twenty-five years later, when a sharp twinge of lumbago gave me my first reminder that I was twenty-five years older.

"It has been an especial delight to me to be present at the many meetings of the national, state and local library associations, especially in a tour throughout the mid-west states in 1917, and when I spoke at Cleveland, Toledo, Fort Wayne, Decatur (Ill.), and St. Louis, and in making the address at the opening of the superb library of Michigan University at Ann Arbor in January, 1920. I have persistently declined the presidency of the American Library Association in the belief that it is better to establish and continue the precedent of having a working librarian rather than a layman at the head of the profession. In 1926, the American Library Association held its semi-centenary conference at Atlantic City, and on October 6th, twelve hundred of the members journeyed to Philadelphia, on special trains, where on the exact anniversary of the organization, I delivered in the Drexel Institute auditorium a historic address covering the fifty years of the American Library Association,⁵ while Melvil Dewey, the other survivor of the three pre-historic founders, spoke in prophecy of the future. With us was Charles Evans, who had also been present at the 1876 conference.

"I was also present at the annual meetings of the Library Association of the United Kingdom at Edinburgh, 1880; London, 1881; Cambridge, 1882, as well as at the international conference in London, 1897 and that at Brussels in 1910.⁶

"For more than thirty years, from 1888, I served as a trustee of the Brooklyn Public Library, as well as from 1891 of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences with its museum and Children's Museum libraries, and of recent years, from 1904, I have been President of the Stockbridge Library Association until 1928.

"Perhaps the best service I have done for the library profession, aside from the foundation work of 1876, has been in connection with the appointment of Herbert Putnam, as Librarian of Congress, in 1899, which was arranged with President McKinley by W. C. Lane of Harvard, then President of the American Library Association, and myself—an appointment which has resulted

in putting the right man in the right place at the head of the library profession, in an institution which he has made the most effective library organization in the world."

To this account must be added a note of Richard Rogers Bowker's happy personal life. Throughout, there were these abiding friendships for work and for recreation. Such an essentially sociable temperament would naturally find keen expression in a group interest; it is not, therefore, unusual to find that he notes among his important activities his club and settlement activities. He was an early member of the Grolier Club, of the Author's Club, and others. He became an active member of the New York Free Trade Club. An organization in which he felt especial interest was the University Settlement Society, "started by Stanton Coit in Forsyth Street as the Neighborhood Guild but later broadened to become an organization supported chiefly through the colleges." Through the City Club of New York, he did some of his serious work.

On January 1, 1902, he was married to Alice Mitchell, of Cambridge, (who, together with his sister, survives him) by their mutual friend Edward Everett Hale, at the home of friends in Brookline, Massachusetts. New York remained the residence. In 1898, he purchased an abandoned farm in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, "at the head of Glendale Street, with beautiful woods, mountain views and the Housatonic River running past the place, leaving me greatly obliged to the many who had looked at the farm and had not visioned its residential possibilities. Here the old brick house was made over in 1899 and thus was happily ready for the bride." One of the important constructions on the place was "the log cabin at the hilltop in the pine woods. Here 'the boys,' elders of Camp Manhattan, each year on my birthday and Labor Day 'camped' luxuriously in Camp Xaipe, and here Saturday mornings Stockbridge men have been wont to congregate for good talk."

Throughout the years, since the reading of proofs of the *American Catalogue*, in fact, eyesight had begun to fail. Whatever may have been the personal reactions and re-girdings, this fact did not, to outward appearances, accelerate or diminish activities and interests. He says of Milton:

On his anointed eyes, God set his seal
And gave him—blindness and the inward light,
That he, repining not at lack of sight,
Might see as never man saw, and reveal
To the unseeing eyes those mysteries real
Of his great parable.

—From the Pen of R.R.B.

5 Bowker, R. R. "Seed Time and Harvest—The Story of the A.L.A." LIN. JOUR. 51:880-886. October 15, 1926.

6 He also attended the Library Association Jubilee in Edinburgh in 1927.

A noble life, translated into human events and activities, demonstrates this thought.

Herbert Putnam

RICHARD BOWKER was to me a near friend. It is extremely painful to write of him in the past tense; impossible at the moment to detach from my personal feeling toward him any mere opinion of him. In any case all that the moment permits is the summary of him that must occur to everyone who knew him and his works.

He was, of course, an idealist; and it was therefore principle that first concerned him. But being concerned also with action he recognized the necessity of expediencies, and accepted them good-humoredly. The action he sought was always a service of some sort: to sound decisions in politics and economics, to his business, to the interests of authors, publishers, librarians, and friends, to libraries as institutions, and to the welfare of society. The qualities he brought to it—to name only a few of them—included an extraordinary purity of motive, a sure integrity, both mental and moral, varied appreciations, wide and warm sympathies, an unfailing tolerance, and a generosity sometimes, I suspect, beyond his means. Affectionate by nature, his loyalties were lasting; and his human interest in his fellow beings rose above all petty distinctions. His loss of sight, which during his latter years became almost complete, did not make him self-centered nor shrink his interest in people, in places, or in the movements about him. He never proffered it for sympathy nor craved allowance for it. Indeed, his whole conduct of it was

an example of uncomplaining patience, courage, and unselfishness.

We had become so accustomed to these qualities and to the undemanding modesty with which he exercised them that it is only their abrupt cessation that may give us a full appreciation of them. Even the tribute of the honorary election to the American Library Association came only during his final moments.

Of the particulars of his service others will write: Dr. Hill, I believe, of that to libraries and librarians, Dr. Bishop of that involving international relations. Mr. Bowker was distinctly an internationalist,—or rather, a cosmopolitan: protestant of all artificial barriers:—to the rights of authors in copyright, of the consumer in tariffs, of scholarship through professional exclusions, of humanity in national, racial, or doctrinal discriminations. In the relations in which we had particular opportunity to observe him—those between the various groups in our profession—he was to be counted upon for the utmost enthusiasm and energy in promoting understanding, interchange, cooperation and the cooperative spirit. And he manifested this not by merely general expressions but by the personal devotion involved in attendance at conferences and discussions wherever held, and the practical support of cooperative enterprises.

As we review him, I am sure that we shall conclude that our profession has had no friend who, without the professional obligation, has aided so greatly to define its aims, maintain its dignity, and promote its fellowship.

Rejoice, our sage of four score years and five.
 I, from my laggard eighty give you greeting.
 Comrades of battle we, still sworn to strive,
 However far may be the goal's completing.
 A blot in the escutcheon of the State
 Reeks like a wound to every patriotic breast.
 Dawn always found your charger at the gate;
 Rifle or trumpet halted not your quest.
 But you are more than fighter; you do lend
 Of your sweet spirit to the world's distress.
 Who needs you is your neighbor and your friend;
 Kin to the virtues of your kindliness,
 Even are cities saved by such as you.
 Receive our homage, brave and wise and true!

—Dr. Robert Underwood Johnson.
*In Honor of Mr. Bowker's
 Eighty-Fifth Birthday.*

William Warner Bishop

NO ESTIMATE of Mr. Bowker's public services to bibliography and librarianship would be complete without mention of his interest in the international aspects of these topics. At an early age he resided in London for some years as the British agent for Harper's and was brought into intimate contact with British men of letters as a result of this experience.

Mr. Bowker attended meetings of the Library Association as early as 1880 and met then and later most of the prominent British librarians of his day. He wrote for *THE LIBRARY JOURNAL* in October and November, 1886, two articles entitled "Memories Among English Librarians," which are still of the greatest interest and value.

These British connections he retained always. In 1897 he attended the second International Library Conference and was one of its Vice-Presidents. He contributed a paper entitled "Bibliographical Endeavours in America" to the Proceedings of that Conference, whose meetings he was fond of recalling in later years.

With the later developments of international relations among librarians Mr. Bowker had much to do. His advice was continually sought and his interest was never appealed to in vain. So recently as last spring he succeeded, almost entirely by his own efforts, in securing from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace a grant which made possible the attendance at the International Library Committee meeting in Chicago and at the Conference of the American Library Association of a number of distinguished European librarians. He was continually in search of information as to the progress of li-

braries in Great Britain, on the Continent, and elsewhere. At the Atlantic City Conference in 1926, as a member of the International Relations Committee, Mr. Bowker attended the informal conference of foreign librarians and the International Relations Committee of the A.L.A. His participation in this conference was most happy and fortunate. His keen mind and quick wit seized on a number of points which arose and developed them, briefly but most successfully. Out of this meeting and later conferences grew the International Federation of Library Associations, which was formed at Edinburgh.

Of late years, whenever I have been in New York, Mr. Bowker was extremely eager to learn of the progress of international library undertakings. He was keenly interested in the development of the Library of the League of Nations, in the reorganization of the Vatican Library, in the annual meetings of the International Library Committee, and was only prevented by illness from attending the International Congress at Rome in 1929. His acquaintance with British libraries was kept up until very recent months, both by correspondence and by visits. He kept in touch as well with the important libraries on the continent. I well remember his description of one or two of these libraries which he visited after blindness had afflicted him. He gave me rather intricate details concerning their administration and their construction,—details which most persons blessed with sight would have overlooked.

In Mr. Bowker's passing the growth and development of international relations among librarians have lost a sincere friend and an effective support.

Eternal Goodness

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

Worthington C. Ford

I FIRST became acquainted with Mr. Bowker about the year 1880, and through my guiding influence, Mr. David A. Wells, long the leader of a reform of the tariff, already far advanced towards extreme protection. There was a society for a revenue tariff in New York and another in Brooklyn and I became secretary of the latter, which threw me into close connection with Mr. Bowker, a ruling spirit in both organizations. Edward M. Shepard was one of us, Horace Deming another, and we had the best lecturers from the outside, fertile in suggestion. The larger part of the members were merchants and bankers, who looked with disfavor upon the increasing tariff duties and their corrupting influence, and young men, sincere in their beliefs and eager to have them applied to current questions. One subject led to another and to tariff reform was soon added civil service reform, municipal reform and the purity of elections. Out of this combination grew the Reform Club of New York, of wide sympathies, great publishing activity, and undertaking many lines of political action.

In all this Bowker was a directing force. He was usually on the leading committees and was regarded as a wise counsellor. Quietly receptive of suggestion from others, he would allow the discussion to continue until he as quickly gave his opinion, eminently practical in its bearing. For he was a fine organizer and judge of the ability of other men, of the part each one could play in the program. Looking back, after a half century, we seem often to have been tilting at windmills. Ugly and cumbersome structures as they were, and little adapted to their purposes, they were driven by a force stronger than that brought against them and the victory was all too frequently against us. Whether it was the fight on the tariff, the struggle for civil service reform, opposition to the Blaine candidacy or to the "scratch convention" of David Hill, or an effort to elect a reform Mayor for New York—there were the joy of conflict, the question of conscience, the winning or losing points and the gathering of young and earnest workers, who did much to spread a knowledge of political ills, of administrative faults and of necessary changes for the betterment of conditions, social and political. Each campaign was designedly a campaign of education. This was before there were good treatises on government, before our universities

were turning out each year a company of experts trained in manuals for administering the concerns of a great city.

For this kind of service, self-sacrificing, disappointing in successes though measuring slow advance in educating public opinion, and wholly disinterested, Bowker was an ideal colleague. He was incorruptible, convinced of the right of the cause he supported and intelligent on the limits of possibility in urging changes. His patience was inexhaustible and it was sorely tried, as there was ever present the too eager and over anxious worker, as well as that indestructible fringe of cranks that is attached to any movement. His catholicity and generous sympathies took him far, as, for example, when he befriended that gentle and convincing apostle in the study of criminal inheritance, Richard Dugdale, author of *The Jukes*. Never did he confess to being discouraged and his quick recovery from defeat was an inspiration to those associated with him. He had an unusual capacity for making friends and creating zealous workers in the cause, and, as he never sought benefit to himself, he offered a wholesome example to the reformers, so liable to win a success and to throw it away in disputing the manner of holding it. It was a rich experience to meet in committee, listen to the discouraging reports of defeat and have the skies cleared by Bowker's immediate plan for a new attack.

The years passed and much that he fought for has been accomplished. There came new conditions, new men, new party alignments, a dropping away of the older workers by death, loss of zeal and conviction, or the temptation of loaves and fishes, and finally by a ready willingness to hand the reform activities to a coming and, in some degree, a better equipped generation. Bowker took on new responsibilities—the development of libraries, among others—and his increasing affliction narrowed his capacity for work; but he never lost interest in the questions of the day, in the always present and pressing problems due to increasingly complex social relations. He was ever loyal to his friends. To meet him for however brief a talk was to bring a remembrance of comradeship in struggle, of lost and won causes and a refreshing whiff of optimism, of hope for better things to come. His work was unfinished—it never could have been finished; and he held a torch in the procession of reformers to the bitter end.

Eternal Life

I saw Life coming toward me—then she passed
With a smile supernal.
Men, looking after, said, "Lo, Death!"—but I,
"Lo, Life eternal!"

—From the Pen of R.R.B.

Brooklyn Public Library

IN THE death of Richard Rogers Bowker on November 12, 1933 in his eighty-sixth year, not only the Brooklyn Public Library, but library service in the United States and throughout the world suffers a severe loss. Mr. Bowker's long career touched life at many points. He was distinguished as a journalist, an author, a publicist, an industrial executive, a leader in the international copyright movement, but above all as a devoted worker for the extension and improvement of public libraries and as an expert in library problems. As one of the founders in 1876 of the American Library Association and of *THE LIBRARY JOURNAL*, in the same year, and as its editor for fifty-seven years, he held a place of unique influence and authority among librarians throughout the world.

Mr. Bowker became a director of the Brooklyn Library in 1888, and upon its consolidation in 1903 with the Brooklyn Public Library he became one of its representatives in the Board of Trustees of the Brooklyn Public Library. For more than thirty years, up to the time of his death, he gave to this Library unremitting and efficient service. In spite of failing eyesight, and in recent years total blindness, he kept fully abreast of the problems of the Library, even in matters of detail with which he could acquaint himself only by heroic expenditure of strength and mental concentration. His knowledge and advice were always at the service of his associates, and his opinions were eagerly sought by them. He was deeply interested in the welfare of the Library staff and continually worked for their professional and economic advancement.

Though he could not see his fellow trustees, with an acute memory for voices, on coming among them he recognized instantly those who gathered to greet him, and he maintained an easy and delightful companionship with them.

With a warm sense of personal affection and a deep appreciation of Mr. Bowker's great service, the Trustees of the Brooklyn Public Library order the entry upon their records of this minute in honor of the dean of the whole company of library workers, and direct that a copy of it be sent to his family.

Authors League Of America

THE AUTHORS League of America learns with profound sorrow of the death of Richard Rogers Bowker. The members of the League join the publishing world in mourning the loss of an outstanding and greatly beloved man whose counsel, energy and enthusiasm have contributed so much to the League's progress since its very inception.

—ELMER DAVIS, Vice-President.

Frank P. Hill

IN THE death of Richard Rogers Bowker the last link in the chain which bound together the A.L.A. and the founders of the Association is broken; not that Mr. Bowker was actually the last, but he was the last active member of the early group who retained a lively interest in libraries and librarians.

That interest had been continuous from 1876 to 1933—a period of 57 years. (As one of the "three guardsmen" he helped to organize the American Library Association.) He was ever foremost in that which would promote the up-building of libraries and increase the usefulness of librarians.

I made the acquaintance of Mr. Bowker at the first conference I attended, Buffalo, 1883—just 50 years ago—and from that time to the day of his death we were the best of friends.

Only a few weeks ago I called upon him at his home in Stockbridge. In the course of a short conversation I asked him if we were to go to the Chicago Conference together (we had travelled this way many times). He smiled, slowly raised one arm about six inches and said: "Does this look much like it, but we shall see?" He abounded with cheerfulness and optimism.

I served with Mr. Bowker on many committees where his sound judgment and judicial opinion often steered members into the right channel. He was a man of strong conviction, a keen sense of right and wrong, and a head full of good old-fashioned common sense.

While always an active member of the A.L.A., willing to serve on committees and council, he never could be persuaded to take the Presidency, urged upon him at least on three different occasions. He did serve as the first President of the New York Library Club, in 1885, more for the sake of getting the Club started than because he wanted to take it.

Mr. Bowker was a trustee of the old Brooklyn Library, and when that institution merged with the Brooklyn Public Library he became a trustee of the latter corporation, remaining as such until his death—a period of thirty years. It was here I came into intimate relations with him and learned to appreciate his advice and counsel—and to follow in his footsteps as closely as possible. His opinions on library matters were always accepted by his brother trustees; and he never led them astray.

Few librarians knew of his diversified literary and business contacts, many of which are noted in obituary notices found in the New York papers of November 13, 1933.

Few men, handicapped as he was by blindness, ever accomplished more in so many fields,

Prince of men; choicest of companions—
RICHARD ROGERS BOWKER.

Arundell Esdaile

IT IS with the deepest regret that I learn of the apparently hopeless and fatal illness of Mr. Bowker, and I write these lines appropriately, after taking part in the Two Minutes' Silence.

It has chanced that only on two or three occasions have I met Mr. Bowker on his visits to England, the last being the Edinburgh gathering of 1927; but in common with everyone else who knew him, I was deeply impressed by the power and dignity of the man, and by his triumph over the disability of his blindness. At an age when most men consider themselves to have earned their rest, and crippled by the greatest disabilities of the senses, he remained eager for the common work; if his eye was dim his natural force was not abated.

The long series of his political and social activities lie outside the library profession. Indeed it is one of the most remarkable features of the man that librarianship was only one facet of his life work, and that (like some of the founders of our British Library Association) he was never a librarian himself.

What *THE LIBRARY JOURNAL* and his friends of the craft, such as myself, are impelled to celebrate in him is of course just that facet. Fifty-seven years ago he was one of that little group of ardent young men who perceived that the library could not rise to the height of their vision of its future without a library profession, nor that profession exist without the meeting ground provided by an Association and a journal. *THE LIBRARY JOURNAL*, which he founded in 1876 and edited, with a gap of a few years, till the other day has always stood for the unity of the diverse types in the profession, and it has therefore been one of the two or three librarians' organs of more than national importance.

The living links with 1876 in America and with 1877 in Great Britain grow very few, and the last must soon vanish. For younger men natural human regret at the loss of such men, the patriarchs of the tribe, is transcended by pride in their achievement and determination to carry on the torch.

At Sea, Armistice Day, 11 Nov. 1933.

D. Edith Wallbridge Carr

DR. BOWKER was a most unusual man, and, in his going, "a giant of the forest" has fallen and left an open space with none to take its place.

His interest in libraries and the American Library Association never abated from the time he signed the register of attendance in Philadelphia, October 4, 1876, until the final summons, November 12, 1933. He was always ready to encourage the young who were just entering the library profession and was happy to see them succeed.

While a contemporary of us of the older generation, his mind remained susceptive to the changes and advances of the present era.

Dr. Bowker had a keen sense of humor and an unusual vocabulary for expressing his ideas that made his writings most interesting and enjoyable.

A letter and a telegram received while I was in Chicago in regard to the Reunion dinner—dictated from his sick bed—showed the usual kindly spirit and the thoroughly original Bowkerism of wording.

Chalmers Hadley

TO ME Mr. Bowker's going brings to an end an era of outstanding importance to this country. We library people knew him best, of course, in our own field of endeavor, but he was too versatile and able to be confined to any one activity. As publisher, civil service reformer, traveler, business executive, *litterateur*—he was equally accomplished, and in his long life he enriched everyone with whom he came in contact. During the two decades of his blindness, I always found him maintaining that fortitude and patience which only real character and a ripe philosophy of life can give. With the many other things which he was, Mr. Bowker was that finest product of civilized life—a cultivated gentleman. We shall miss him sadly.

Finis Coronat Opus

"The end shall crown the work"—
Ah, who shall tell the end?
It is a woesome way,
And clouds portend.

The work is all we know—
Enough for our faint sight.
The end God knows. Press on!
The crown—is light.

—From the Pen of R.R.B.

R. R. Bowker Company

TO FEW men has it been given to fill life so full of effective work for significant enterprises and unselfish labors for public causes. From college classrooms he stepped directly into editorial and political activity; his genius for organization and zeal for public good brought to him nearly seven decades of continuing activity.

Even in this, that was to be his last year, and as he approached the honored age of eighty-five, his keen mind, not for a moment admitting the handicap of his now complete blindness, analyzed each turn of a complicated business year; listened avidly to each report from the new Washington administration; gave his thought and comment to publishers' code programs, urging his office to all possible cooperation; followed with close interest the plans for the great Library Conference, busying himself especially with the plans for international library representation; instilled new action into the Free Trade League (how often he had been called on to give fresh power and direction to some public cause); restudied recent copyright legislation and outlined a new draft for Congressional consideration.

To some, his dramatic contribution to politics as the organizer of the Mugwumps was the thing called to mind when the word of Mr. Bowker's death was read; some recalled that he was the first literary columnist of a New York paper, or that he helped found one of the first college journals; some remembered the stories he had told them of the London publishing world of the early '80's, or perhaps, of the dramatic struggle for the advancement of international copyright. To some he was the business organizer, as when Edison Electric was new, for he had a gift for the incisive analysis of business details. To many came to mind his talent for public speaking, for presenting the spirit of an occasion and for calling to high purpose. Many thought of his unquenchable faith in a friendly world and his generous willingness to support any cause for better international understanding. Or again of his love of travel that led him over the world to both the strange and the familiar scenes, a love of places unstopped by encroaching blindness.

But most of all, we think, he would wish to be remembered for his lifelong fervor for the cause of the book, for the rights of all authors, for the sound progress of publishing with open criticism of current misdirections and praise for new experiment, for a renewed growth of book-selling supported by an adequate and open-mind-

ed trade journal, and finally, for a country-wide public use of books through every agency of the nation, state and town. Few advocates of the place of the book have had such statesmanlike conceptions of the ways to sound accomplishment, none could have shown more indefatigable will to serve.

To this high service Mr. Bowker added gentle and lovely qualities. He was devoted to his friends, remembering their interests and their personal problems. He loved good talk, and his Saturday gatherings of friends at Glendale were made notable and memorable by his leadership. He was always the sensitive and thoughtful husband as during the years of Mrs. Bowker's illness. He was hospitality itself and thought out every detail of a guest's pleasure. He was quietly generous in a hundred directions which will never be put in records.

Among the staff that he brought together, for the development and extension of his publishing plans and those that he took up from Frederick Leyboldt's beginnings, he called forth the same devotion to the cause of books that he himself held. Always he was the inspired leader, considerate to all, generous, just, stimulating, far-sighted.

National Association Of Book Publishers¹

THE NATIONAL Association of Book Publishers records its feeling of deep sorrow and irreparable loss in the death of the Dean of American publishers, Mr. Richard R. Bowker.

A founder of the American Library Association, publisher and editor of *The Publishers' Weekly* and of *THE LIBRARY JOURNAL*, indefatigable worker for decades in the cause of copyright, author of many valuable works, he has during his long career been a distinguished leader and a powerful force for the highest standards in the world of books.

His indomitable spirit in permitting no impairment of his many important activities because of an almost complete loss of eyesight has set an inspiring example worthy of high admiration.

His friendly and sympathetic personality, with his invaluable services to authorship and publishing, will ever be held in high affection and honor in the memories of all his *confrères*.

¹ Resolution passed by the Board of Directors of the National Association of Book Publishers, November 16, 1933.

After Death in Arabia

Faithful friends! It lies, I know,
Pale and white and cold as snow;
And ye say, "Abdallah's dead!"
Weeping at the feet and head
I can see your falling tears,
I can hear your sighs and prayers;
Yet I smile and whisper this,—
"I am not the thing you kiss;
Cease your tears, and let it lie;
It was mine, it is not I."

Sweet friends! What the women leave
For its last bed of the grave,
Is a tent which I am quitting,
Is a garment no more fitting,
Is a cage from which, at last,
Like a hawk my soul hath passed.
Love the inmate, not the room,—
The wearer, not the garb,—the plume
Of the falcon, not the bars
Which kept him from these splendid stars.

Loving friends! Be wise and dry
Straightway every weeping eye.—
What ye lift from the bier
Is not worth a wistful tear.
'Tis an empty sea-shell,—one
Out of which the pearl is gone;
The shell is broken, it lies there;
The pearl, the all, the soul, is here.

Farewell, friends! Yet not farewell;
Where I am, ye, too, shall dwell.
I am gone before your face,
A moment's time, a little space.
When ye come where I have stepped
Ye will wonder why ye wept;
Ye will know, by wise love taught,
That here is all, and there is naught.
Weep awhile, if ye are fain,—
Sunshine still must follow rain;
Only not at death,—for death
Now I know, is that first breath
Which our souls draw when we enter
Life, which is of all life center.

—EDWIN ARNOLD.